

CONCLUSION

We need friends. But which friends?

We need a Friend Who has power over sin and can admit us to "the everlasting home" when this world is on fire.

That Friend is God Almighty & we need to invest all we have with Him.

NOTICE the added lesson here vs.10-13.

We are not owners of what we hold, but stewards of the wealth of Another. We need to look to the day when the Owner will require an accounting of how we have managed our trust - whether for selfish indulgence or for His eternal purposes.

On the basis of what we have done with the wealth He has put in our keeping will our Lord determine whether we are to receive the true and eternal riches.

And, just an afterthought. In our service to Him, we had best not be too weak to work earnestly for His cause or too ashamed to beg for forgiveness

"I LOOKED" poem by Brennan

Anahua, TX 12/12/93 (SCOUNDREL)
8/4/02

LEARNING FROM A SCOUNDREL

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Intro:

The Parable Of The Unrighteous Steward - Lk.16:1-13

1. Jesus used many ways to teach us the nature of the kingdom of heaven.
2. His illustrations, noted for their simplicity and familiarity, usually hit home easily.
3. But His parable of the unrighteous steward (Lk. 16) has been the cause of a great deal of puzzlement.
4. The story of this unseemly character seems especially out of place, coming, as it does, just after the touching account of the prodigal son. - *Father's Love*
5. Luke alone records some of Jesus' most striking parables and this is certainly one of them.
6. It serves as an excellent demonstration of the principle that the parables of the Lord were so framed as to make only ONE important point about the kingdom.
7. Their details usually having no more significant duty than simply to make the physical application of the story. *cf. Good Samaritan - Oil & Shillings*
8. Let's read the parable: Lk.16:1-9

I. I suspect that most of us here today are sitting some place between material comfort and material affluence.

We are pretty much strangers to poverty, and we view our circumstances as a blessing, which they can be - but not a test of character, which they most assuredly are.

Thomas Carlyle once said, "For every man that can handle prosperity there are twenty that can handle adversity."

It is for this reason that we need to be seriously asking ourselves how we are going to spiritually survive this "lap of luxury" into which God, in His providence, has placed us.

Our full cupboards and peaceful lives can, if we are not careful, destroy us. In fact, they WILL unless we learn the important lesson of this unusual parable.

II. Some people can't believe that Jesus would somehow commend this man.

Others have taken this story and produced widely-varying and often contradictory explanations.

Actually, the one lesson of the parable will become remarkably clear when all the parts

of the story intended merely for background are allowed to be just that.

It's obvious that the central character of this parable is an outright crook.

The Lord Himself calls him "unjust" or "unrighteous" (vs.8).

He was the trusted manager of a rich man's estate and had been wasting his master's wealth, either by fraud or extravagant living.

Discovered in his betrayal and called upon the face the music, this dishonest, but cunning, steward begins to consider his options for future survival.

Honorable routes are dismissed. His background makes him too proud to beg and his easy life has made him too soft to work.

He decides to steal even more from his master by arranging with his master's debtors to reduce the amount they owe. (vs.5, 6, 7)

There was no guarantee that their gratitude would bring him a place with them when his present position was gone, but he did face the realities of his situation and looked to the future.

Jesus startles us a bit by saying that the steward's cheated master expressed admiration for his shrewdness (vs. 8)

And then He startles us even more by commending the man's shrewdness Himself: vs.8b.

III. Our amazement can be relieved if we recognize that Jesus is not commending anything about this scoundrel, except one thing - he had sense enough to face the realities of the future and make provision for them.

This principle alone He urges upon His disciples: vs.9. *the physical used to obtain the eternal.*

This is not a secondary message. It is central to the spiritual life.

If we are wise, we will face the fact that death is going to take what we are presently holding and that our sins have put us in terrible jeopardy for the future, unless we have wisely used what we now control,

I LOOKED

I looked upon a farm one day,
that once I used to own;
The barn had fallen to the ground,
The fields were over grown.

The house in which my children grew,
Where we had lived for years ---
I turned to see it broken down,
And brushed aside the tears.

I Looked upon my soul one day,
To find it too had grown.
With thorns and nettles everywhere,
The seeds neglect had sown.

The years had passed while I had cared,
For things of lesser worth;
The things of Heaven I let go
While minding things on Earth.

To Christ I turned with bitter tears,
And cried, "O Lord, forgive!
I haven't much time left for Thee,
Not many years to live."

The wasted years forever gone,
The days I can't recall;
If I could live those days again,
I'd make Him Lord of All.

---Theodore W. Brennan.

ON SUNDAY NIGHT

I Love the church that Jesus bought,
And I know that it is right;
I go there on Sunday morning
BUT NOT ON SUNDAY NIGHT.

I Love to sing the songs of God,
Such worship must be right;
This I do on Sunday morning,
BUT NOT ON SUNDAY NIGHT.

God bless our preacher, too,
And give him power and might;
And put a sinner in my place,
I WON'T BE THERE SUNDAY NIGHT.

True, The church can save the world,
If its light shines bright;
I help it out on Sunday morning,
BUT NOT ON SUNDAY NIGHT.

And when at last I come to die,
May I be doing right;
So may I die on Sunday morning,
BUT NOT ON SUNDAY NIGHT.

--- Author Unknown.

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